



# Coconino County Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

*Presented to the Public Safety Communications Advisory Commission*

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Public Safety Interoperable  
Communications Office



# Technical Assistance Grant



- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP) provided a NECP Goal 2 Technical Assistance (TA) Grant to Arizona – September 7, 2012
  - OP-TTX Communications-Focused Table top Exercise (TTX)
- After receiving their NECP Goal 2 Report, Coconino County began closing their communications gaps by working with the Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Office to complete their Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TICP)
- The Communications Focused TTX was offered to Coconino County to test their recently completed TICP

# Technical Assistance Grant



- OEC assigned a team to work with the PSIC Office and Coconino County
- A preplanning conference was held, meeting dates were identified and the Coconino County Emergency Manager was identified as the point of contact for the Coconino County Tabletop Exercise (TTX)
- Meeting Schedule:
  - Initial Planning Conference – December 12, 2012
  - Final Planning Conference – January 22, 2013
  - Tabletop Exercise (TTX) – February 18, 2013
  - Quick Look Meeting – February 19, 2013
  - After Action Conference – March 26, 2013

# Goals and Objectives



- The TTX was designed to achieve the following goal:
  - Enhance the overall readiness of the region in the event of an actual emergency involving a large-scale disaster.
- The TTX focused on the following objectives:
  - Review the policies, procedures, plans, and assets for operable and interoperable communications available to or required by exercise participants.
  - Exercise regional communications plans.
  - Discuss the ability of the participating public safety personnel to rapidly and effectively establish interoperable communications in the case of a major, multi-agency incident.
  - Determine the capability gaps of communication systems used by regional agencies in response to a multi-jurisdictional incident.

# Initial Planning Conference



- Local, state and federal agencies from throughout the county were invited to attend
- Overview of the TTX process
- Discussion of the TTX which included:
  - Potential communications gaps in the region that should be tested
  - Identification of what agencies should participate
  - Determine what the scenario(s) should entail to ensure all identified agencies would be drawn into the TTX
  - Agency participants (ex: dispatch supervisors, command, decision makers, etc)

# Final Planning Conference



- Reminder that only Planners attend this meeting
- Reviewed the scenarios with the Planning Team
  - Ensured all participating agencies were engaged
  - Finalized any unresolved details regarding the exercise
  - Verified dates, times and location for the TTX
- Identified who should receive the TTX After Action Report (AAR)
- Reviewed which Players should attend and participate in the TTX
- Discussed logistics of the TTX (room layout, lunch and date/times)

# Tabletop Exercise



- Sixty-nine players, observers and evaluators participated
- Situation Manuals (SITMAN) were provided to all Players and Observers.
- Participants were positioned in the room by roles and agencies:
  - Observers were grouped around the edge of the room
  - Players were grouped at tables by agency and/or function (Fire & EMS together)
  - Evaluators – spread throughout the room taking notes
  - Facilitator – up front running the meeting



# Roles & Responsibilities



- **Players** – respond to the situation presented based on current knowledge of response procedures, plans, cross-jurisdictional agreements, and communications capabilities
- **Observers** – do not participate in exercise play during the moderated discussion period, instead take written notes of the jurisdictional, training and technological interoperability gaps noted during exercise play.
- **Evaluators** – serve as subject matter experts and take written notes of observed communications successes, gaps and areas of uncertainty.
- **Facilitator** – provides situation updates, moderates the discussion and keeps the exercise play focused.

# Tabletop Exercise



- Facilitator explained the Rules



# Scenario



- Set on the campus of Northern Arizona University (NAU)
  - Students are preparing for finals
  - Series of demonstrations have occurred with protest group, scheduled through Facebook
- Phase 1 – Dispatch & Notifications
  - 911 callers report an explosion in a building on NAU Campus
    - » Windows blown out, possibly laboratory and office spaces damaged
    - » Callers report an unknown number of injuries.
- Phase 2 – Initial Response & Assessment
  - First responders arrive on scene and report two fatalities & approximately six injured (injuries vary).
  - Witnesses report at least nine students unaccounted for.

# Scenario



- After each Phase a full group discussion was encouraged among all immediately impacted agency participants.
- The Facilitator kept the discussion focused on how communications would be achieved – interoperability, social media, PIO, etc
- Potentially impacted agencies were engaged to ensure their participation



# Scenario



- Phase 3 Incident Evaluation

- Paramedics initiate on-site triage efforts and law enforcement establish a perimeter.
- Officers report shots fired - seconds later responders report two officers down

- Phase 4

- Main road in and out of NAU is shut down due to vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Traffic is backing up into town

- Phase 5

- Local communications are severely degraded due to the amount of use by students and local citizens. The Regional 911 center and University Police Dispatch are inundated with calls.
- Cell service is not working for emergency responders

# Scenario



- Phase 6 – Secondary Response & Assessment

- 911 callers report a vehicle leaving at a high rate of speed – driver roughly matches the campus shooter.
- The driver loses control down the I-40 and clips a tour bus full of Japanese tourists, overturning it. The bus blocks eastbound I-40.
- The driver of the vehicle flees into the terrain from the scene

- Phase 7 – Emergency Operations Centers (EOC)

- County EOC and NAU EOC are both activated to address the additional resources that are needed for all incidents/scenes.



# Scenario



## • Phase 8 – Media/Public Information

- Both dispatch centers are inundated with media requests. Media is enroute to both incident scenes.
- Rumor is that the Flagstaff and Campus Police Chiefs, already on campus for a meeting, were the two officers critically wounded in the shooting.
- The explosion and ensuing response were captured on mobile devices and were immediately posted to multiple social media sites.



# Scenario



- Phase 9 – Mutual Aid Partners

- Bus – 40 riders, 20 injured, five deceased
- Local hospital is overwhelmed
- Driver remains at large and search continues.
- Highway horribly backed up
- Rescue activities continue on campus at the explosion site
- Additional public safety resources are required. State and federal agencies are engaging in the effort.

- Phase 10 – Intelligence & Investigations

- Public Safety sensitive radio transmissions are being scanned
- Incident commanders are looking for secure ways to communicate

# Scenario



- Phase 11 – Next Operational Period & Transfer of Command
  - Evacuations are mostly complete from the crash site
  - Explosion victims have been transported to local hospitals
  - Four students are still unaccounted for – search & rescue continues
  - Driver is still outstanding – search continues
  - Current rescue teams have worked through the night and need relief – next operational period begins



# TTX Completion / Hot Wash



- At the completion of the TTX all participants were encouraged to stay and take part in a Hot Wash, an opportunity to share immediate feedback:
  - Participants were pleased with the TTX and the opportunity to interact with so many different agencies
  - Requested to do additional tabletop exercises and ensure all agencies were fully engaged
  - Participants shared take-aways needing specific agency follow-up

# Quick Look



- Participants were invited to attend a “Quick Look” the next day to discuss the initial outcomes of the TTX
- The Facilitator and Evaluators prepared a high level overview of the TTX, which was shared with the attendees
- Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback on the overview for the After Action Report

# After Action Conference



- An electronic copy of the After Action Report was distributed to attendees from the prior meetings.
- All participating agencies were encouraged to attend to discuss this report.
- A few of the Successes:
  - Excellent multi-agency, multi-discipline participation in this exercise
  - Regional agency representatives quickly recognized the benefits of operating from a Unified Command structure.
  - Command personnel identified the need to co-locate their command structures in part to reduce the need for additional command-level radio communications.

# After Action Conference



- Recommendations were made to improve regional interoperable communications proficiency when responding to an incident.
  - Continue to collaborate as a region on implementing Unified Command structures for multi-agency incidents.
  - Develop protocols to address dispatch center roles and responsibilities during significant incidents that heavily involve more than one dispatch center/PSAP.
  - Designate a single cross-banded radio frequency (RF) talk path exclusively for direct communications among all PSAPs in the Coconino County region
  - Program regional radios in accordance with the Arizona Interoperable Channels Plan - Priority Programming Guide which includes Arizona Interagency Radio System (AIRS) channels and appropriate national interoperability channels.

# After Action Conference



- Detailed recommendations were included for review
- Final After Action Report was provided to the Emergency Manager for distribution to the stakeholders

# Agencies that Helped Make This A Successful Exercise

Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)	Flagstaff Fire Dept	NAU Emergency Management
American Red Cross	Flagstaff Police Dept	NAU Police Dept
Blue Ridge Fire District	Flagstaff PD – 911 Comm	NAU Public Affairs
Camp Navajo Fire Dept	Guardian Medical	NAU, Center for Microbial Genetics & Genomics
Coconino County Emergency Management	Guardian Medical Transport	Ponderosa Fire Dept
Coconino County Public Health	Highlands Fire Dept	Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC)
Coconino County Sheriff's Office	ICTAP	Sedona Police Dept
Coconino National Forest	Kaibab Natl Forest Comm	Sedona Fire Dept
AZ Dept of Public Safety (DPS)	Kaibab Natl Forest/Sherwood Forest	Sherwood Forest Estates Fire
DPS (Dept of Public Safety)	Northern Arizona University (NAU)	Summit Fire Dept
Emergency Management/CERT	NAU Admin	Williams Police Dept

# Thank You!



Thank you to Robert Rowley and Ruthanne Penn for all of their coordination efforts.



# Discussion; Questions?

## Thank You!

Robert Rowley

Coconino County Emergency Management



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